(iii) A Group Insurance Scheme has been implemented to provide cover to the powerloom workers against unforeseen death, accident and disability.

(iv) With a view to improve the working environment and enable the powerloom workers in obtaining higher productivity, Government has implemented a Group Workshed Scheme. This Scheme provides subsidy for construction of worksheds limited to 25% of the unit cost of construction subject to a maximum of Rs. 80/-per sq. fit. In order to improve other infrastructure facilities the scheme envisages a link with the Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme (TCIDS), which provides Central assistance for improving critical infrastructure in existing or emerging textile centres.

(v) For modernisation of powerloom sector, a programme for induction of 50,000 shuttleless and for 2.50 lakh semi automatic and automatic looms in the decentralised powerloom sector has been announced. Incentives have been made available under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) whereby the powerloom owner can reduce the cost of borrowing capital either by availing 20% Credit Linked Subsidy or by obtaining 5% interest reimbursement on the loan availed.

Decline in export of oil meals

1743. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of oil meals declines by 34 per cent in the first quarter;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to correct the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons for decline in exports is increased production in major competing countries and increased consumption in the domestic market leading to lesser availability of oil meals for exports.

(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance agri-exports include sending delegations abroad, participating in International trade fairs, inviting potential buyers and providing financial assistance to exporters for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of products and conducting market surveys. Recently, the excise duty on Food Grade Hexane, which is a solvent used for extraction of oil, has been reduced from 32% to 16%.

Setting up of nine industrial estates

1744. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to set up nine industrial estates, with an investment of Rs.1500 Crores, in the Eastern States of the country, to promote industrial activity in the region; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, including State-wise locations identified for setting up the industrial estates and the pattern of funding evolved therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion had proposed a Scheme for Integrated Infrastructure Development of the Eastern and North Eastern Region. The Scheme would be applicable in the 8 States of North Eastern Region *viz.* Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim and the Eastern States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Under the Scheme, there would be two (2) industrial locations each in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal,Orissa and Assam. For the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim there would be one (1) industrial location each. Government would provide a 'one-time' assistance of Rs. 100 crore to each such industrial location for integrated infrastructure development. Planning Commission has accorded "in-principle" approval in order to enable preparation of a Detailed Feasibility Report (DFR) on the said Scheme.

Assistance to coir producing States

1745. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: